



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Riverview School

Elementary-Middle-High School Q277

**1-50 51st Avenue
Queens
NY 11101**

Principal: Susan McNulty

**Date of review: March 18 - 19, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant, Ed.D.**

The School Context

Riverview is an elementary-middle-high school with 129 students from grade kindergarten through grade 9. The school population comprises 17% Black, 41% Hispanic, 20% White, 19% Asian, and 2% other students. The student body includes 37% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 77% of the students enrolled and girls account for 23%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.2%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Celebration	Well Developed
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Additional Findings	Well Developed
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Well Developed
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Focus	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that all curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions results in coherence across grades and subject areas and promote career readiness for all learners. Across grades and content areas, individual and groups of students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal convened teams last spring to review and augment the curricula to include the Common Core units of study, as well as create high-level performance tasks. In addition, as part of the school's plan to close the achievement gap, teams looked at the Learning Standards for Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) and the District 75 Frameworks to incorporate tasks that include different learning modalities. Teams also created teaching points that embed higher-order thinking questions and activities into units of study.
- The classroom teachers and the English as a second language (ESL) teacher plan to include English as a second language strategies to support students' access to key standards. Planning includes the ESL teacher teaching side-by-side with the alternate placement paraprofessional and the classroom teacher in order to model strategies to encourage the use of English. Planning for this team teaching approach was evidenced in the shared planning between an ESL and classroom teacher in a 12:1:1 high school English class, where the lesson plan expected students to work in groups to prepare a survival kit based on four necessities described in the novel, *The Hatchet*. This plan indicated that the classroom teacher would teach in English and that the ESL teacher would provide support in the form of scripted English phrases, visual aids including pictures and/or real life objects, and modified text in varying levels of difficulty and length.
- Teachers review the Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) reading, writing, and communication data, and the rubric scores from monthly Common Core aligned unit performance assessment tasks. This data provides teachers with information to plan for grouping students into learning environment categories. Teachers noticed that assessments with limited modalities to express performance negatively impacted student results. Teachers created new performance assessment tasks for each unit of study that require use of tactile, visual, and auditory modalities which aligned directly to the student's assigned levels A-D. As a result, teachers shared that students are engaging for longer periods of time on task as well as using varied modalities for communication to demonstrate their learning.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness to families. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture that consistently communicates high expectations for all learners. However, successful partnerships with families are not yet fully established.

Impact

The school is in the process of building partnerships with families to support student progress towards expectations so that students, including high-needs subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Although the school utilizes Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings and weekly parent outreach during the Tuesday parent engagement time and monthly parent trainings to allow for partnership with families to support parents in understanding the children's past, current, and future programs, parents mentioned the difficulty of attending these meetings because of the location of the school and its distance from their home. In addition, the school does not provide a progress report between report card periods to inform parents.
- The principal provided training to all staff on the implementation of the daily communication books to parents, where teachers write about the student's day. Parents were given a survey asking them to identify three things that they would like to hear about their child in the daily communication book. A majority of the parents conveyed that while they liked the narrative format of the daily communication book, they wanted to hear more consistently from related service providers and be given more specific examples of what students were doing in class so that they could engage nonverbal children at home in replicating school activities. Based on this feedback, the school's social worker conducted professional development for the staff on how to use the communication book with parents. A draft template form was created for related service providers to use. The template lists students' goals and provides an area for providers to update student progress and answer any questions or concerns parents may have. As this is a new initiative, the impact of this template is not yet evident.
- The principal is establishing a vocational education program to prepare students for work in the community and creating opportunities for students to perform work tasks in school. To do this, she created a vocational education cluster teacher who created a vocational education curriculum. In addition, the principal created an Adaptive Daily Living Skills (ADL) classroom and simulated a work place environment where students wear ID badges and use time cards. All grade 6 to grade 10 students participate in simulated job settings in a pre-vocational education class three times each week. Students then use learned skills in a school setting job before moving to a job within the outside community. Student supports include paraprofessional job coaches, video modeling programs, self-assessment plans, and job readiness lessons. Environmental structures and visual cues are consistently used to provide the supports students require to be successful in the simulated clerical, culinary and maintenance programs. The vocational education teacher has made contact with local vendors to establish working relationships towards future community job sites for students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high quality supports, including targeted questioning and discussion techniques.

Impact

All learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Consultants from Birch Family Services provide support to teachers in implementing the structured Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Related Handicapped Children (TEACCH) approach to teaching. TEACCH is an evidence-based service, training, and research program for individuals of all ages and skill levels with autism spectrum disorders. Across classrooms, students are engaged in this work system approach. This method informs students of what is expected of them during an activity, how much is supposed to be accomplished, and what happens after the activity is completed. The goal is to teach students to work independently. According to the TEACCH method, the most functional skill for autistic individuals is a routine, which involves them in checking their schedule, and following the established work system based on their IEP goals.
- Middle school students' work products included informational brochures on communities from the nonfiction unit of study. Students spoke about their research projects on New York, and created books, maps, tri-fold boards, and dioramas to present information learned in class aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards. Students shared that teachers want them to engage in activities that require thoughtfulness.
- Teachers provide multiple entry points into various academic activities in the form of manipulative materials, technology, and visual organizers. Evidence was seen during classroom observation in the use of Smartboard presentations for introducing lessons, followed by formation of student small break-out groups where manipulative materials were presented in the form of adapted books, visual schedules, work systems, and recorded presentations. For example, middle school students conducted extensive research using websites and written material, and participated in small group discussions answering higher order level questions on learning about neighborhoods through the use of informational texts to complete graphic organizers as a template to create their own brochures and maps. Students used a self-assessment checklist to guide, assess, and explain their work.
- During classroom visits, all classes were observed utilizing the TEACCH methodology. All classrooms routinely have students follow individual schedules, attend to visual cues throughout the room, and use technology support in the form of Smart Boards, iPads, go talks, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) books, and computers.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teacher assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding to understand student and relevant subgroup performance, progress, and learning needs.

Impact

All learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The Equals math series includes a pre- and post-assessment checklist for each unit, as well as an electronic assessment scoring system, which provides an item analysis of the results, and shows immediately if a student has mastered the unit. Teacher teams use these assessments to refine their unit plans as well as prepare for small group instruction. After analyzing Equals assessment data, teachers adjusted the curriculum by re-teaching skills and adding manipulatives to reinforce concrete skills and demonstrate more abstract skills. Teachers adjusted curricular assessment tools to align with the varying modalities among students. The school attributes improved student performance on the SANDI assessment to the targeted information provided by the Equals assessment, which assisted the middle school team to make informed adjustments to the math curricula.
- Teachers use workstation task checklists to record whether or not each student understands their workstation assignment that is based on their IEP goal. Teachers make notes on the checklist, identifying strengths and deficiencies observed during center time to assess students' mastery and/or need for additional support for students' continued growth and understanding of key lesson elements. During walkthrough observations, all classroom teachers had 1:1 workstations. Teachers and paraprofessionals were observed taking notes on small group data sheets which listed specific IEP and curricula goals for each student in their class.
- Based on their cognitive level, students engage in self-assessment on the tasks they complete. Teachers provide students with checklists as well as a pocket schedule to self-assess their independent time management and task completion. Teachers monitor students to gauge how well students demonstrate responsibility in adhering to the schedule throughout the school day. Students also use contingency boards to self-assess their behaviors. Contingency boards provide visual support that act as a means of self-assessment for students reinforcing student behavior leading to engagement, participation, and task completion. Finally, students also use timers to regulate and assess their expected behaviors following a plan designed by teachers and autism coaches (i.e. teacher sets the timer, student manages behavior, engages in task to completion, and rewards self when timer goes off). These practices allow students to manage interfering behaviors allowing them to follow their schedules and the steps needed to begin and complete ongoing tasks.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teacher teams systematically examine student work, plan together, and visit each other's classrooms to share ideas and best practices. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching.

Impact

The work of teacher teams results in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery for groups of students. Distributed leadership structures provide opportunities for teachers to play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Administration, district coaches as well as the outside Birch Family Services consultant identify lead teachers at each site to build capacity within the school. These teachers are trained to mentor, model for, and support colleagues in the building. In addition, each site has a unit coordinator who works to mentor staff, provide consistent support, and share best practices in the unit. Lead teachers attend outside professional development, turnkey information to colleagues, mentor new teachers, act as models during inter-visitations, and supervise specific programs in the school.
- One lead teacher has been assigned to supervise the schools Structured Methods in Language Education (SMiLE) multi-sensory language, reading and writing program, and has attended all SMiLE module trainings earning a Train the Trainer certificate. This lead teacher now trains and observes staff using the program. Trained teachers were observed using the program for instruction. The school's lead teacher model enables the organization to build capacity at their multiple sites. Unit coordinators are involved in assessing and choosing school-wide curriculum with administration. They are trained in chosen curricula and facilitate weekly curriculum team meetings working with teachers on adapting lessons for varying levels of students, revising rubrics, and creating end of unit performance tasks. Evidence of this was seen in teacher team meetings as well as classroom visits. This shared leadership has led the staff to establish a school-wide structure of identifying, targeting, and assessing students to be used consistently throughout the school to increase learning outcomes.
- Teacher teams consistently gather and generate diagnostic data to inform instructional practice and set next steps for individual students. At a teacher team meeting observed, the presenting teacher shared a videotape of a SMiLE session with a student and the teacher, asking the team to focus on how she could increase the student's reading fluency through using SMiLE reading strategies.
- The administrative cabinet, which includes teachers, assesses and chooses school-wide methodologies, curriculum, and assessments, develops pacing calendars, and creates a yearlong professional development calendar to address school-wide needs for learning. In addition, the team writes school-wide procedures, protocols, and routines for the day-to-day operation of the building including but not limited to safety, bussing, meals, bath rooming, arrival, dismissal, trips, shared space, and lateness.